

27th Annual LACC Honorary Starter is 9-Year Pancreatic Cancer Survivor, Tom Arai!

The Hirshberg Foundation is thrilled to introduce Tom, our Honorary Starter for this year's 27th Annual LA Cancer Challenge. Tom's story is one of remarkable resilience, determination, and hope—a true testament to the spirit of our pancreatic cancer community.

Nine years ago, at 65 years old, Tom received a diagnosis that would change his life: stage 4 pancreatic cancer. At that time, the five-year survival rate was less than 3%, so Tom focused on one day at a time, maintaining a remarkable attitude and calm demeanor that inspired everyone around him.

Throughout his journey, Tom's wife, Toni, has been a pillar of support. Once diagnosed, she tirelessly researched to find a great medical oncologist, which led them to Dr. Tara Seery, who they deeply respect and admire.

Immediately after his diagnosis, Tom began a clinical trial that would ultimately change the course of his disease. Through his medical team's dedication and unwavering commitment to treatment, Tom achieved what many thought was impossible. Following the trial, he was considered to have no detectable cancer—a moment of triumph and hope for him and his loved ones. Today, at 74, Tom takes Lynparza, a maintenance chemotherapy drug. His youthful spirit and positivity have kept him strong and made him a beacon of hope for others facing similar battles.

Driven by the challenges he's experienced and inspired by the incredible support he's received; Tom has dedicated himself to

giving back. Encouraged by his primary care physician, he started talking to other patients to offer insight, tips, and support. Before long, with another survivor, he founded a weekly Zoom support group for pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers across the U.S., creating a space for sharing experiences and building a community of strength and solidarity.

Before his diagnosis, Tom was an avid cyclist for 25 years, riding up to 20 miles daily. His passion for cycling kept him physically fit and mentally strong, preparing him for the battle ahead. In 2018, Tom took a leap of faith—literally—when he jumped out of an airplane with other pancreatic cancer survivors to celebrate their shared journey. Refusing to let pancreatic cancer take away their enjoyment of life and adventure, Tom and his fellow survivors went skydiving in Perris, California.

Before the LACC 5k race begins, Tom will take the stage to share his journey, offering all participants words of wisdom and encouragement. His story is about surviving, thriving, and finding joy and purpose every day. He embodies the message that while cancer can change the course of our lives, it does not define who we are or limit what we can achieve.

We invite you to join us at the LA Cancer Challenge, not only to support pancreatic cancer research but also to be inspired by individuals like Tom. Whether you are running, walking, or cheering from the sidelines, your participation makes a difference in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

Tom's story is a beacon of hope and a testament to the progress in cancer research and treatment. Let his journey inspire you to push through your challenges and support those fighting theirs. See you at the starting line!

“Love Rides” at the 12th Annual Tour de Pier

South Bay artist displays life-size custom artwork at the award-winning outdoor stationary cycling fundraiser to honor loved ones and friends in the fight against cancer

In the battle against cancer, it takes love and the dedication of community to make a difference. South Bay artist [Wendy Stillman](#) is showing her support by creating the custom-design mixed media painting, “Love Rides” which will be on display at the [12th Annual Tour de Pier](#) outdoor stationary cycling fundraiser on Sunday, May 19 at the Manhattan Beach Pier & Strand.

Masterfully using acrylic on canvas, Stillman’s artwork is a large, vibrant 7.5 feet by 7.5 feet painting featuring healing heart hands surrounded by symbols of support. “As a local artist and longtime resident here in the South Bay, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to create a large custom piece of art for the Tour de Pier,” said Stillman. “These hand hearts represent all the love people are expressing by participating in this event and riding at the Tour de Pier to honor loved ones, friends, and the fight against cancer.” She added, “I wanted to create a large, strong piece both physically and visually to symbolize the power we have collectively to stand together as a community to fight the fight, and what better way to symbolize that than two hands coming together to symbolize love.”

Since the launch of the Tour de Pier more than a decade ago, the hand heart gesture has been incorporated into rides as a symbol

of love and hope for those fighting cancer. This year, the Tour de Pier is honored that Stillman will be sharing her incredible art with the community. "Our goal this year is to weave the healing power of art into the Tour de Pier. Over the years, the hand heart has been a unifying gesture of love and support between our instructors and the participants," said Heath Gregory, Co-Founder of the Tour de Pier. "We wanted to embrace hand heart fully and extend the sentiment into the greater community with Wendy's help and talent. Her piece, 'Love Rides' is a symbol of the love we have for our greater South Bay community and a message of love and hope to those fighting cancer."

Broadening community engagement, the Tour de Pier shared the "Love Rides" collaboration with the youth arts program of [Indivisible Arts at Resin](#) in Hermosa Beach, a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating creativity, consciousness, and connection through the arts. Stillman created a project for kids to create smaller 8-inch by 8-inch versions of the hand heart painting so they could participate in the community's effort to show support for all those fighting against cancer. Artwork of students from Indivisible Arts will be showcased, along with Stillman's painting, at the Tour de Pier.

The hand heart design will continue to have prominent presence at the Tour de Pier as it will appear on the front of this year's exclusively designed t-shirts worn by participants and volunteers. Hosted by [Splatterz Studio](#), kids and adults can craft their own hand heart design (for a suggested donation) at the Health & Fitness Expo which is free and open to the public.

To catch a sneak peek of Stillman's painting in the weeks leading up to the Tour de Pier, visit Culture Brewing Co. in Manhattan Beach and the Bay Club in El Segundo.

The Tour de Pier will be held at the iconic Manhattan Beach Pier & Strand, 2 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The fundraiser benefits a trio of nonprofit cancer organizations that work tirelessly to advance research and provide multi-layer support services: Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research, Cancer Support Community South Bay, and the Uncle Kory Foundation for Brain Cancer Research. To learn more about “Love Rides” and the Tour de Pier, visit www.tourdepier.com.



Tour de Pier – What Your Ride

Funds

Each year, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Tour de Pier community, our three cancer charities are able to provide crucial support for patients and fund groundbreaking research. As we gear up for an epic 2024 ride, we want to look back at 2023 and highlight the progress each charity was able to make because of your fundraising and generosity. We can't wait to see what we can accomplish together in 2024!



The Hirshberg Foundation

In 2023, the Hirshberg Foundation was able to fund 8 new individual & collaborative [Seed Grants](#), collectively awarding 120 projects to date. The Seed Grant program continues to produce results and past Seed Grant recipients presented at conferences around the globe in 2023. As a long-time sponsor of the American Pancreatic Association (APA) Meeting, their 2023 opening symposium addressed the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in diagnosing, treating and advancing pancreatic cancer research. At the end of last year, the [Agi Hirshberg UCLA Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#) moved to a beautiful new space on the UCLA campus that offers patients and loved ones world-class integrative care in one convenient location.

Through direct patient interactions, in 2023 the Hirshberg Foundation provided invaluable support services to over 200 newly diagnosed patients and their families. Their [Patient & Family Webinars](#) and Symposium videos help pancreatic cancer patients & caregivers learn from top medical professionals, share their stories and connect with one another. The Hirshberg Foundation is proud to partner with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) to develop extensive guidelines on care options, treatment protocols, and expert recommendations, all made available in their latest [Guidelines](#) book.



We've got brain cancer surrounded.

The Uncle Kory Foundation

In 2023, the [Uncle Kory Foundation](#) (UKF) funded \$200,000 to their brain cancer Seed Grant Program, \$150,000 in Collaborative Grants and \$100,000 in second year Renewal Seed Grants. They also contributed \$100,000 to a program that is near and dear to the Tour de Pier community and the South Bay, the [Fight Like the Averys Grant](#) (FLAG) which supports pediatric brain cancer research programs. UKF was also able to provide \$10,000 in [Medical Student Grants](#) at UCLA and Duke University.

Thanks to the support from the Tour de Pier, as of January 2024, UKF has awarded \$3,650,000 in grants to 61 projects focused on finding better treatments for adult and pediatric brain cancer.

UKF research grants have led to over \$2.2 million in additional funding from the National Institute of Health and other funding opportunities. Together, we have brain cancer surrounded.



Cancer Support Community Redondo Beach

CSC South Bay provides hope, education, and support to cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones completely free of charge. CSC South Bay offers [200 programs](#) per month (both in-person and virtually) which include support groups led by licensed mental health professionals, healthy lifestyle classes, educational workshops, counseling, and Kids Community programs.

In 2023, thanks in part to the support from the Tour de Pier, CSC South Bay served 1,950 individuals through 755 support groups. Their 572 Healthy Lifestyle Classes include restorative yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, sound bowl healing, and walking groups to provide healing and emotional wellness. 130 educational workshops covered topics from nutrition to relaxation techniques to caregiver support. They provided 464 no-cost counseling sessions and 2023 saw an expansion to 364 new participants and an 80% increase in Kids Community attendance. CSC South Bay was recognized for their great work with the 2023 Daily Breeze Award for the Southbay's Best Nonprofit Organization.

It is thanks to you that our three charities have been able to continue their important work. Our research and patient programs are made possible because of your participation, fundraising and generosity. We look forward to seeing you at the 2024 Tour de Pier – let's continue to make a difference for our cancer community!

21-Year Pancreatic Cancer Survivor, Roberta Luna to be Honorary Starter for the 26th LA Cancer Challenge

As the Hirshberg Foundation brings our vibrant community of supporters and fundraisers together for the [26th LA Cancer Challenge](#), we are thrilled to share that this year's Honorary Starter will be 21-year pancreatic cancer survivor, Roberta Luna!

For two decades, Roberta and her beloved husband Vic have been on a crusade to give back to their community and to embrace patients and caregivers going through a journey that the Lunas know all too well. "Through my experience with this horrific disease, I believe I am here to help those who have also been affected by pancreatic cancer, to hopefully inspire them and give them much needed hope." Putting her beliefs into action, Roberta is a volunteer, activist, patient advocate, guest speaker at awareness events and survivor panelist at the

Hirshberg Foundation's Symposium for Pancreatic Cancer. This year we are thrilled to welcome her as our LACC Honorary Starter, and we invite you to [register and join us](#) too!

Over the years, Roberta has shared her harrowing story of how pancreatic cancer took her father, her mother and her uncle before impacting her own personal health by her early 40's. "I decided then and there I wasn't going to die; I was going to fight this with everything I had." Every step of the way, Roberta has stood strong as an advocate for patients. Most recently, she has given a voice to fellow survivors through her podcast: [Living Hope; Your Journey with Pancreatic Cancer](#). Living Hope is a weekly podcast sharing the real-life journeys of those affected by this disease. Her goal is to educate, raise awareness, provide hope, and a spark of inspiration for survivors and caregivers. The [Living Hope](#) podcast is also a returning sponsor of the LA Cancer Challenge this year.

Today, Roberta instills hope in newly diagnosed patients and long-term survivors alike. "Hopefully, you find inspiration from my story about how, through the good, the bad and the ugly, we can weather the storm with the support of our loved ones, our family, 'our purple family' and the many people we meet along this often-difficult journey."

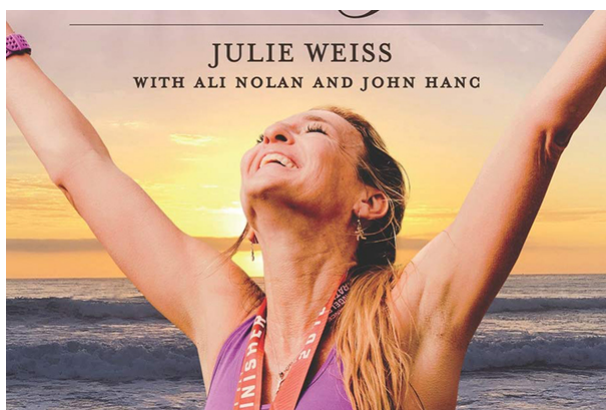
We are honored and humbled to call her a friend of the Foundation. As the Hirshberg Foundation shares its LACC mantra to "Fight to the Finish," there are no better words than a quote Roberta shared years ago. "As I lace up my purple boxing gloves for the 19th time, I challenge pancreatic cancer to put on its gloves and prepare for the next round...I am still standing and I'm not giving up!"

Great Running Gear that Gives Back

Starting a new training program requires commitment, but also the right gear. To help you put your best foot forward, we've compiled a list of suggestions from our [Hirshberg Training Team](#) coaches who've been helping people accomplish their running goals for over 20 years. These items come endorsed from our coaches and experienced HTT alumni and are sure to help make your running, or walking, experience as memorable and enjoyable as possible.

One click and you'll be ready to hit the road and begin your training. When you purchase these items through our Amazon program, we get a small portion of the proceeds so shop knowing you're also giving back!

Here is list of items (after good running shoes, of course) that we recommend for everyone starting their running journey:



[The Miles and Trials of a Marathon Goddess: 52 Weeks, 52 Marathons](#) – Get inspired by HTT Alumnus Julie Weiss, who, after the loss of her father to pancreatic cancer, set out to run one marathon a week for a year and raise \$1 million for pancreatic

cancer research.



[Body Glide Original Anti Chafing Stick Balm](#) – This stick prevents rubbing that can lead to chafing & raw skin. Safe for use on body parts ranging from arms and chest to butt and balls!



[EltaMD UV Sport Body Sunscreen, SPF 50](#) – Sweat resistant and water resistant up to 80 minutes, this oil free sunscreen will keep your skin protected while you are out there logging miles.



[GU Energy Original Sports Nutrition Energy Gel](#) and [Clif Bar – Energy Chews](#) – When you're on your long runs, you'll appreciate having a little snack to give you a quick energy boost. And these both taste great too.



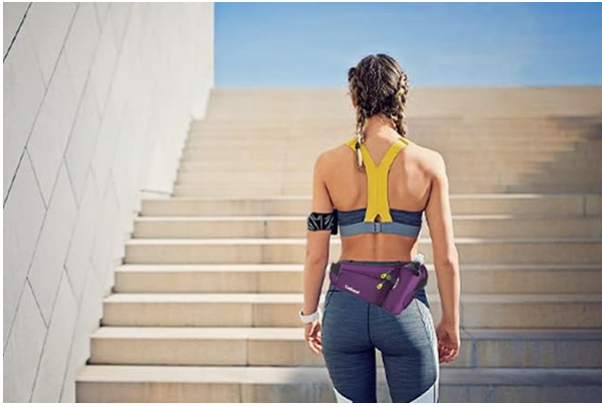
[Purple Rymora Leg Compression Sleeve](#) – Wear these on your legs for calf support and pain relief. They're comfy and provide pain relief.



[Apple Watch Series 8 \[GPS 41mm\] Smart Watch](#) – As a runner, technology is your friend. This Apple Watch has a fitness tracker, blood oxygen & ECG apps, always-on retina display and is water resistant. While you are at it, may as well get yourself a [Purple Band for your Apple Watch](#). After all, everything is better in purple!



[Women's Under Armour Purple Sports Bra](#) – This Crossback Mid Impact Sports Bra delivers strategic support, wicks away sweat, dries fast, and best of all comes in our favorite color.



[Purple Hydration Running Belt](#) – This water bottle hydration belt with reflective waist pack details will hold your water bottle, some snacks, a phone and any other small items you may need while you're out running. Plus, this design keeps your hands free.



Running shorts for [Men](#) and [Women](#) – You guessed it, we found great running shorts with moisture wicking and pockets – in purple, of course – for both men and women.

Happy running!

To learn more about the Hirshberg Training Team or to share your favorite running products, contact our HTT Program Manager, Martin Fung at martin@pancreatic.org.

More Easy Ways to Help You Fundraise

If you want a simple and easy way to fundraise, there are tons of national companies that want to partner with passionate people just like you. We've compiled a bunch of ideas, from dining to shopping, to help you fundraise for the Hirshberg Foundation, and we're here to help you along the way!

Host a Restaurant Night

Many national restaurant chains support non-profit organizations via restaurant nights. It's simple – you pick the restaurant and the date then encourage friends and family to support you by dining in or ordering take-out. The restaurant then donates back a set percentage of sales to the non-profit. Typically, the process begins with the restaurant website to sign up and receive your custom flyer or unique code to help promote your event. Most restaurants will ask for a non-profit Tax ID (which we can provide for you), desired location, date and time and number of expected guests.

We've compiled a list of some great dining spots to consider with links directly to their fundraising program. And if you don't see your favorite restaurant below, just ask them!

- [California Pizza Kitchen](#)
- [BJ's Restaurants](#)
- [Chipotle](#)
- [Blaze Pizza](#)
- [Panda Express](#)
- [Raising Cane's](#)

Organize a Sweet Fundraiser

[See's Candies](#), one of America's most iconic chocolate stores, also has a great fundraising program. Simply set up your online shop, spread the word, and let the sales roll in. All purchases are shipped directly to your supporters and the Hirshberg Foundation receives the proceeds. This can be done all year round or, even sweeter, for particular holidays like Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

[Krispy Kreme](#), the beloved doughnut shop, does some sweet fundraising too! Krispy Kreme Fundraising was created in 1955 to provide a way for qualifying community organizations to raise funds for their worthwhile causes. Choose from virtual or in-person sales of the classic doughnut and receive a portion of the proceeds. Krispy Kreme Fundraising is here to help you raise some dough!

Plan a Shopping Party

[Kendra Scott Jewelry](#), with over 100 stores across the country, is committed to supporting non-profits like the Hirshberg Foundation. Their "[Kendra Gives Back](#)" community-giving program allows community members to host in-store events for causes including health and wellness, with 20% of the proceeds going directly to the benefitting cause. Sounds simply dazzling to us!

[Evereve](#), the company that delivers curated, contemporary women's fashion through 100+ retail stores nationwide is another charitable minded fashion business. You can host an Evereve "[Fashion Fundraiser](#)" where 15% of your guests purchases will be donated to the Hirshberg Foundation. It's perfect for large groups, plus your guests shop anytime on the fundraising day during store hours. It's the best type of retail therapy!

The businesses listed above are just a few of the many national companies with programs to help you fundraise for a cause you're passionate about. Once you have set your date, please let us know! We want to help you make a difference for the pancreatic cancer community – and who doesn't love a good reason to dine out, grab a sweet treat or hit the mall!